k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

CHAPTER XIII

Morality

587 There is no immorality, as we know it, among the desert tribes. There is, of course, plenty of marrying and giving in marriage, and as I have said, divorce is so easy that a woman often has six or seven husbands in her lifetime, and a man always as many wives as he can 548 837 afford, provided he confines himself to four at a time. Prostitutes are unknown among the Badawin, and adultery is punishable with death.

572 Friendships between men and women, on the other hand, exist, and are recognised, especially if the parties are of the same tribe and are related, for example my friend Shaikh Thuwairan Abu Sifra of the Mu'aha section of the Mutair, was a friend of Muthi, wife of Falah bin 369 'A'amir, also of the Mu'aha. Every Badawin, of course, is aware that 548 immorality exists in the big towns, and this is one of the main reasons why he despises the townsman.

Unfortunately a Badawin man up from the distant desert sometimes finds his way to the prostitute quarters when he visits towns [164] such as Mecca and Madina, Jiddah, and Kuwait. This has resulted in the spread of syphilis and venereal disease among the tribes.

In Wahhabi-land proper (i.e. Sa'udi Arabia, excluding the Hijaz), no prostitute is tolerated even in the towns, let alone among the tribes, but I am told that there is nevertheless a good deal of clandestine immorality.

731 It is curious but true that if you discuss the question of morals with 612 well-informed Najd Badawin, they will always tell you that certain great shaikhly families of the desert, especially in the north, have always had rather loose morals, while certain others stand out for their good morals and generally high tone. For instance, the well-known shaikhly house of Al Sha'alan (Ruwala) as well as that of the Hawaitat, Bani Sakhr (both Trans-Jordan), and Shammar Jarba (Iraq), are all said to be pretty lax where women are concerned, and conversely Al Hadhal (Amarat), the Dushan (Mutair) and the Hamidda ('Utaiba)

29: Glubb--3 G-3 (ca.1935) 1943 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4
Sulubba

651 Until about 1930, the Sulubba paid regular
724 tribute to all the Beduin sheikhs for pro-
563 tection. This did not, however, safeguard them
157 from continual petty pilfering, beatings and insults. Beduin travelers or raiders invariably called at Sulubba tents if they could find them, and demanded food and hospitality. The Beduin, who is normally a model of sedateness and reserved decorum among strangers, exhibited the worst aspects of his character in a Sulubba camp. He shouted, bullied, cursed, and swaggered in a manner sometimes shameful. He demanded the best food, cursed his host, complained of everything, ate all he could and then demanded more food to take with him as supplies for his journey. The Sulubba cowered and whined. Long oppression has indeed made them very low class. The ingratiating whine in which they address the Beduin as "Ya Amaimi," "Oh my little uncle," makes one ashamed of human nature!

837 Prostitution is reputed to be widespread among
● 548 the women. Whether or not this statement is too sweeping, there can be little doubt that most of them have a very low standard of morals, and are frequently sought by Beduins for immoral purposes. This traffic can scarcely be unknown to their husbands and brothers, but they seem too debased to protest. While there is a good deal of immorality among the Beduins themselves, such offences are kept strictly secret, and any woman creating a scandal is likely to be murdered. Only the Sulubba seem to be shameless in this respect.

221 The Sulubba are par excellence the children of
[10] the desert. Every Sulubbi is nicknamed by the Beduins "Abu al Khala" or "Father of the empty spaces." If the Beduin, compared to the townsmen, is a hardy traveler at home in the great desert, he is but a pampered tenderfoot compared to the Sulubba. Often in summer, when the great Beduin